PACIFIC SCHOOL

THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY
PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER

SEPTEMBER 1951
Vol. II No. 9

RUSSIAN HUMAN BEINGS

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HUMAN RELATIONS
AT WORK

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THE
FRONTIER
A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

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Monthly Letter

MUCH of this number of *The Frontier* is about Conferences, the summer season for which is drawing to an end; and an international Conference in Germany will be the subject of the present Letter. This was the meeting of European Laymen which was arranged by the Ecumenical Institute in pursuance of a policy recommended at the great Ecumenical Conference at Amsterdam in 1948. It was held at Bad Boll in Wurttemberg, an agreeable rural health resort, where over 200 representatives of the European laity lived, studied, conversed and worshipped together for ten crowded days. They came from seventeen countries, and included a batch of Displaced Persons, as well as a few observers from other continents. Led by protagonists of the world-wide ecumenical movement like Dr. H. Kraemer and Dr. W. A. Visser't Hooft, and lectured to by such stalwarts as Dr. von Thadden and Bishop Lilje, the rank and file included many who are responsible in professional or business positions as well as in Church life. The meeting was thus a substantial one, worthy of present strivings both towards Christian unity and European co-operation. To the British deputation in which there were three members of the Christian Frontier Council including one of your editors, it proved a moving experience; and we want to share our impressions and reflections with *Frontier* readers.

"*The Rediscovery of Man*"

It is often said after conferences that the experience of meeting and the debate itself are more important than the conclusions. In this case the set subject—"Towards the Rediscovery of Man"—could hardly have been expected to lead to definite pronouncements about human nature and destiny. But there really was a sense of rediscovery. There had never before been an encounter between such a representative gathering of European laymen. Few had known before the surprise and delight that one feels upon one's pulses in such a company when groups and individuals, who would never otherwise have met, discover deep agreements beneath the differences that divide them, and know that the former are the stronger. This happened often at Bad Boll, despite the difficulty of proceedings in three languages, which made some of the discussion rather lame and uncertain. It was a rediscovery of brotherhood made possible by a common discipline, that of continuous group Bible study; as well as by the devotional meetings held morning, noon and night, where a simple form of united worship in three languages—four when there was also a Latin hymn—was felt not as an obstacle to devotion but an enrichment of it No wonder, as Jean Bosc wrote after the Conference, that "oppositions and divergences were day by day receding to a secondary level, losing their absoluteness and becoming relative."

The effects were to be seen not so much in the set proceedings and debates as in the spontaneous conversations between sessions, or at night around the lamplit tables on the restaurant terrace (talks now and again drowned in the roar of one of those huge lorries with trailers which kept one aware, even on this secondary road, of Germany's tremendous transport activity). Here, for instance, you could find a Greek Orthodox earnestly comparing notes with a British Methodist; French and Germans and Dutch discussing Christian trade unions. Those who would never other-

wise have known of each other except as units in a category of politics or economics, were conversing with full candour and confidence as individual persons, realizing what was common not only to their thinking, but often in their circumstances—establishing thereby the only sound basis for understanding their real differences. Up to a point, we could say that Man was being rediscovered before our eyes.

What Can Lay Conferences Do?

To have experienced this is to realize the need for more of it, more ecumenical gatherings of all kinds. But we are only at the beginning, and may as yet be far from having found the best ways of developing such an interchange of life. Doubts were expressed, when conferences of "the laity" were first mooted, whether there would be any sufficient foundation of common thought and experience. After all, "the laity" means anyone, of any Christian allegiance, except the relatively few clergy. Could they bring any concrete question to a clear issue or even respond usefully to a specific lead? Bad Boll suggests a double answer to this. On the one hand, we have seen that such a general, unspecialized congress can be richly rewarding, and there will be room and recurrent need for others like it. On the other hand, Bad Boll went some way to confirm and clarify the original misgiving. For it was most coherent when it was least "lay". As Miss Batten observed from the platform, she doubted if the audience before her was quite as "lay" as it looked; and in fact though there were few ordained clergy, the number occupied in works ancillary to the Churches and in higher education was large in proportion to the representatives of industry and commerce. Naturally, therefore, the clearest lead and response was forthcoming in questions that interested the existing ecumenical organizations, including the question of European unity. But there was a notable exception. On one subject the "laity" at least showed that they had a common intellectual problem, for when Professor Ellul delivered his

discourse on " Man in a Rationalized Mass Society ", they sent in no less than fifty questions. Such a spontaneous response showed pretty clearly how they feared that man was being lost and needing " re-discovery ". Lay conferences may have a special value in thus raising issues, although to resolve them requires meetings of other kinds.

Rationalized Mass Society

A word about this burning question, for it further illustrates the point just made. Professor Ellul was presenting a thesis now well enough known—namely, the danger that man may be crushed under the weight of his own scientific technics and social organization. The sheer weight and momentum of technological progress seem to be dragging humanity irresistibly along this single line of progress, regardless of any other ; while the new sciences of sociology, propaganda and opinion research threaten to sap the individual's will to think and act for himself. This intimidating notion of man's present situation is being widely entertained to-day, to the perplexity of very many Christian and humanist thinkers. Professor Ellul's was a reasoned and not an alarmist statement ; often those who argue his case the most pessimistically are the scientists themselves. The lecturer quoted the remark of a public opinion expert who had told him that the new techniques of exploring and moulding public opinion would without doubt progressively enslave men : nevertheless it was his appointed skill and he meant to exercise it to the end. Einstein, too, we were reminded, had said there would be no more intellectuals in a generation or two—which of course would mean the speedy decline and perhaps disappearance of our whole technological culture. What is the meaning of this picture of modern man thus losing his soul to gain a world of his own inventions ? If it is correct, should there not be a kind of resistance movement against science (a Christian scientist has indeed been known to renounce his career from a fear that science has become a cult of " forbidden know-

ledge ")? This was not at all Professor Ellul's intention. At the extra question time allowed for the flood of questions he disclaimed any sort of Gandhian revolt against power technics, and re-affirmed their legitimacy.

The Risk of Amateurism

But his own grounds for hope were still not too clear. They can be best inferred from what he afterwards wrote in the Paris *Réforme*. This was a critical estimate of the Conference, and included the following paragraph :—

> " When one thinks of all the researches undertaken in recent years in psychology, psycho-sociology, psychometry ; of the impressive results of scientific studies of man ; and of all the efforts towards that synthesis of the human sciences which is one of the highest hopes of the learned, it is disappointing to have found no mention of all this in a congress for the ' Rediscovery of Man '. One is disappointed at the mediocrity of what Christians have to say. The Christian, it may be said, knows only Jesus Christ, and that is so : but he need not therefore ignore the labours of man, and he ought to avail himself of the means that the world has prepared for his use. The faith does not excuse us from being good workers. And in their own businesses Christians are as a rule good workers ; but to the Church's business they bring an amateur mentality. . . . This is one of the great lessons of this Congress. . . ."

With due deference to the main discourses, of which two or three were excellent, there is substance in what Professor Ellul says here. For instance, the psychologists are already at work on this revolt against science (which began long before the atom bomb). They say it is not due to any real proofs that the dangers of scientific progress out-weigh the promises. They ascribe the revolt to the anxiety and insecurity that man always feels whenever he succeeds in establishing a new ascendancy over and against Nature. About this, theology should have something to say. At the same time, other physical sciences confirm some of the dangers as very real indeed. How are Christians to draw the right con-

clusions and to confront the world with them? No amateurism will enable us to do this: the "fatality of technics" is a mental construction of man, and can be dispelled only by mental activity of a higher potency than that which produced it.

The Biblical Basis

For fairly obvious reasons, the continental Protestant Churches, when they get together, tend rather to concentrate anew on their common foundations than seek to draw the up-to-date consequences from them. This is one reason for the very special prominence given to Bible study in ecumenical meetings such as the present conference. Our non-Catholic brethren on the Continent are far more conscious of dependence on their tradition of Bible study as a common discipline. One of the things that the British deputation wished to put on record, when they held a meeting near the end of the proceedings, was how much they were impressed by the value of this study, which went on every day in bilingual groups of about a dozen or fifteen. Constant reference to the canonical scriptures common to the entire Church establishes contact, it brings to light the underlying unities between Christians of different communities and countries, in a way that must be experienced to be believed. In this its value outweighs the very considerable differences of interpretation of which one saw signs, for instance, in a special study group devoted to the position of the Bible in the light of modern knowledge. Here there were no absolute "fundamentalists", but there seem to be many engaged in practical Bible-teaching who still think that any use of modern critical methods is just looking for trouble. On the other hand, there is a fresh wind blowing—the modern historical interpretation of the Bible as the record of the action of God in the concrete events of world history—this is gaining ground, and it is a liberating force, surely a re-emphasis upon what must always have been the essential interpretation. And in this connection we encountered two suggestive ideas—one, that the right understanding of the

Bible and its unique importance comes by a process not unlike that described as " the Appreciation of Art " in last month's *Frontier*—an aspect upon which one of the German delegates was writing a book. The other is a growing belief, on the part of a few, that the end result of the criticism and revaluation of the Bible in terms of historical and other science, far from weakening its claims may actually renew its power and authority as the revelation of ultimate truth. Theologians have of course been saying this for a long time ; but the laity are only gradually making the discovery for themselves.

This conference of European laity was without any representative of the great supernational Church centred in Rome. Two observations may be made about this, however. One had as usual glimpses in conversation, even with individuals prominent in Protestant activities, of their very conscious indebtedness to Catholic scholars, thinkers and workers in various fields, including Bible study. On the other hand, almost any Churchman from England quickly realizes that continental Protestantism is more keenly, or anyhow differently, aware of itself as a protest against the Papal claims. They have the minority spirit ; in Spain they have suffered recent violent persecution and still live under serious civil disabilities ; and elsewhere are not free from apprehensions of invidious treatment.

Spain

The Spanish Protestant churches, by the way, have almost a sense of grievance at their neglect by members of other Reformed churches travelling in Spain. It seems that such visitors to Spain or the Spanish islands too seldom make any contact with them, and have no idea of the warmth of welcome they would receive if they did. The under-estimation of these churches is insufficiently explained by their smallness. In Spain only one citizen in a thousand is Protestant, though they make up a far from negligible

minority throughout the Spanish-speaking world: but one wonders whether the political ostracism of Spain in the last fifteen years may not have clouded human and spiritual relations which ought never to have been affected.

The worst time for Protestants in Spain was just at and after the close of the late war, when General Franco's pronouncement on religious liberty released them from the underground existence to which they had been confined since 1939. No doubt the ensuing violence against them was mainly political in notivation, a hang-over from the excesses of the civil war, and was due to a crude indentification of Protestants with red "fellow travellers". The State failed, at least for a considerable time, to enforce what legal protection it had extended to them, and the state-sponsored Church failed to condemn the crimes against them swiftly or emphatically enough. The right gestures did come from some bishops, notably Barcelona; but, as the Abbé Couturier and Pastor Delpech said, in an essay they jointly signed: "One would have wished to see, at the first sign of actual violence, an immediate revulsion, widely publicized, a cry of pain from the Spanish Catholic conscience, a resounding protestation: then the evil might have disappeared in the good." Protest could still be made against the legal disabilities. The liberty for Protestants in Spain is no more than Christianity in general enjoys in Russia—less, in respect of the marriage laws and the refusal to recognize conversion from Catholicism as a reality.

The deputation of Spaniards at Bad Boll, however, came without having any obstacle put in their way by their Government; rather the reverse. The Spanish Government is very well-disposed towards the ecumenical movement. We also gathered that, if Spain were given the full recognition and membership in the U.N.O. which is being indefinitely withheld, the effect upon the political atmosphere of Spain would be favourable for the Protestant minority.

Germany

And what of Germany, where the meeting was held? Of course one had only a passing glimpse of the country, a little fraternizing with fellow travellers in trains, and the impressions gained in conversations with the German friends. But to those of us who remembered Cologne, for instance, twenty years ago, or the then superb railway station of Stuttgart, the sight of a devastation far exceeding anything at home is a shock: in England one lived through a less thorough destruction and saw it happen in stages. Here one felt moments of acute depression and a kind of remorse. It is humbling, and somewhat intimidating, to see this irrepressible, brilliant, industrious and obedient people now once again recovering, working out their own rehabilitation; but it is disquieting to see the state of mind in which some—one has no idea how many—are doing it. Recover they will, and powerfully: they are thinking, organizing and working with their customary concentration; what else could they do with their lives? Against the fear that it might be physical recovery in a spiritual void, however, we may set that resurgence of religious faith and community, of which the signs in Germany are even more impressive than elsewhere. Several members of this Conference came straight from the great Kirchentag in Berlin, of which an account by Michael Foster appears upon a later page. Whatever one may ascribe of the ardour of that immense gathering, to its being the first open reunion between Germans of the East with the West, and in that sense a national event, the fact remains that it was a religious one. Deeply devotional, it was only rendered possible in the name and the power of Christ, and by those human energies to which alone we can look for the renewal of community in this great central tract of our Continent.

East and West

One of those who visited us from this Berlin meeting was Dr. Niemöller, who gave us an informal question time: and

our German members made him devote most of this to explaining his now well-known views about Germany's relations with the East. Two things should be remembered when criticising Dr. Niemöller's opposition to any plan for incorporating Western Germany in the Atlantic system of defence, and the priority he gives to relations with Russia. Most of his own religious communion are on the Eastern side of the curtain; he has inescapable responsibilities as a leader, in a Church that is divided by the bisection of the national territory, but is still the only recognized all-German national institution. Another thing is the vigorous reaction of nearly all Germans against having to re-arm. (The way they nurse this as a grievance seemed to us surprising, since the Western Governments and General Eisenhower have explicitly renounced the idea of pressing this point upon them: but some of them say the political pressure remains and is exerted in unpleasant ways.) What we did feel obliged to question was the talk about the "decadence" and "devitalization" of Europe, in contrast to an alleged "biological" power of the East. As regards Europe, this seems quite unwarranted by the facts, and belied by the vigour and speed of recovery in all these war-wracked countries: quarrels and political difficulties are not all necessarily proofs of decay. On the contrary, the Continent is full of tensions, strivings and suppressed aspirations which, whatever psychic and economic dangers they hold, are signs of immense vital resources. Not least of these is the spiritual ferment in Europe's religious communities of which Bad Boll, and the other conferences reported here are manifestations. It is in such a coalescence of devotional life and work, if anywhere, that we may look for the ordering and redemption of Europe's disordered vitalities. For this is something directed to a vision beyond and above Europe, to the re-discovery of man through his reconciliation with God.

INTERIM

European Co-operation

Frontier readers may recall certain questions about the psychological and political resistances to European co-operation which were quoted in our March, 1951, issue. They were taken from the report of the first meeting of the "Ecumenical Commission on European Co-operation" which met again at Bièvres in France in July. It must be observed that this body is *not* an official commission of the World Council of Churches, as many critics persisted in assuming despite its disclaimers. It was arranged, however, in connection with the Study Department of the W.C.C. and its members, mostly laymen, are drawn from a wide range of European countries and religious denominations. Its second report shows that it has arrived at a more united and positive standpoint: it pronounces decisively in favour of a common policy of European integration within the Atlantic Union.

* * * *

A colleague of ours, with some tough experiences of the difficulty of concluding even such limited, practical details of inter-European adjustment as have hitherto been possible, told us that any plans for uniting Europe as a whole belonged to the realm of escape literature. This Commission's last statement presents the opposite opinion. It briefly reviews the only apparently alternative rôles of Europe in the existing world, rejects them as flights from the realities, and bases its case for union primarily on the facts of modern life.

* * * *

The Commission concluded its meeting by framing a special statement for submission to the Churches of Europe as follows:—

1. "We believe that at a time when the vital problems of Europe are becoming increasingly supra-national, and can only be solved through the co-operation of the various countries, the European Churches should enter into closer relationships with each other, and co-operate to a far greater extent than they have ever done hitherto.
2. "The purpose of such co-operation between European Churches should not be to defend their interests against, nor to isolate themselves in any way from, other sister Churches in the Ecumenical Movement. It is rather to enable them to meet together the challenge and the opportunities which are inherent in the new situation of Europe, and to render effective witness concerning

the many problems of a general European character which arise to-day.

3. " Europe has a great Christian tradition, but this tradition has largely lost its meaning for the great mass of the people. The Christian task is not to restore the old order but to lay the foundations for a new order. This implies the discovery of new forms of Christian obedience and of community life.

4. " The Western European Churches have a common as well as an individual responsibility to the Churches in Eastern Europe. They should make a special effort to understand and explain the lessons which these Eastern European Churches are learning, and the spiritual discoveries which they are making. They should seize every opportunity for fellowship with these Churches, and on no account allow a political separation (imposed from the outside) to develop into a spiritual separation.

5. " The European Churches have furthermore the common task of helping European Christians to change their attitude towards the peoples of Asia and Africa. They must make it clear that the colonial period is definitely past, and that Europeans, Asians and Africans can only arrive at a truly Christian relationship with each other if all sentiments of superiority or of revenge make way for a conscious acceptance of human solidarity.

6. The European Churches have the common task of entering into a fraternal conversation with the American Churches concerning the relationship of America and Europe to each other. The purpose of this conversation is to arrive at a mutual understanding with regard to the specific relationship between their continents and the independence and autonomy without which this relationship cannot be mutually helpful.

7. " The European Churches have also a common task in the social realm. They should speak out together concerning fundamental weaknesses and injustices in the present European economy, and prepare their members to make such sacrifices as are necessary for the building up of a responsible and just society on a European scale.

8. " The European Churches should ask themselves whether the purely national form of organization which they have at present is adequate to the new situation, and whether they should not begin to create organs of common life which will manifest more

clearly the supra-national character of the Church, and thus enable it to speak to the condition of European man of our day.

9. " Steps can be taken immediately to collaborate in such practical realms as interchurch aid, theological education, training of missionaries, exchange of pastors, and youth work."

Frontier Luncheons: New Series

The Luncheons that were arranged in London during last winter and spring were so much appreciated and provided so valuable an opportunity of communication between the Frontier Council and readers of *The Frontier* that it became quite clear that another series should be held in the coming autumn. Only one question has seriously perplexed the committee charged with making the arrangements. Should the Luncheons continue to be held at the Royal Empire Society or should they be held in some other hall where the price of tickets could be reduced? No more attractive place could be found than the assembly hall at the Royal Empire Society, but many readers of *The Frontier*, who want to attend the Luncheons and to bring friends, have found the price of tickets there an obstacle. It has therefore been decided as an experiment to hold the next two Luncheons in *Queen Mary Hall* (entrance in Great Russell Street through the Y.W.C.A. building), where the price of tickets can be reduced to 3s. 6d. each. Then, in the light of experience it will be possible to decide which is to be preferred as the regular place of meeting.

The first Luncheon of the new series will be held on Thursday, October 18th, at 12.45 p.m., when Professor H. A. Hodges will speak on " Gambling and the Law ". Dr. Hodges is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Reading and was a member of the Royal Commission on Betting, Lotteries and Gaming which recently issued its Report. The chair will be taken by Mr. George Goyder, a member of the Frontier Council and author of *The Future of Private Enterprise*, who contributed " Second Thoughts on Gambling " to the April number of *The Frontier*. *Two* forms of application for tickets are enclosed with this issue of *The Frontier*: readers may be glad to send one of them to a friend. Applications for tickets (which must be obtained in advance) should be addressed to the Christian Frontier, 8 The Cloisters, Windsor Castle.

Another Frontier Luncheon will be held on Thursday, December 13th.

RUSSIAN HUMAN BEINGS

ALMOST everyone who lives for any length of time in Russia comes away with a strong love for the Russian people, whatever he may think of either Tsarism or Communism. It is no doubt natural to have a kindly feeling for any people among whom one has spent much time, but the feeling which so many of us have for the Russians is stronger and deeper than the affection of habit. In Russia human relations seem so often to flow straight from the self of each man or woman without the interposition of that wall of reserve which we in this country build up laboriously around ourselves.

Every Russian seems to be more interested in what a man is than in what he does, and this makes the Russians prompt to see good in the worst of men and to feel pity for all unfortunates, whatever the cause of their misfortune may be. Law and formal justice seem to them far removed from the realities of human nature, and this attitude goes with a deep strain of anarchism in every Russian. It has been said by a Russian, Professor Milyukov, that "Russian society lacks the cement of hypocrisy"; and an Irishman, Hubert Butler, after living with a Soviet family, writes, "The English are a social people but not sociable like the Russians. Their social organization only works because their impact on each other is superficial. They glide about, cannoning off each other like billiard balls. They can calculate each other's reactions accurately because they hardly ever impinge. But Russians make real contacts. It 's as hopeless trying to organize them socially as to play billiards with bullseyes."

These qualities have something to do with the Russian type of Christianity. The western Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, place a greater emphasis on standards of conduct and social obligation, but the Orthodox claim that they have maintained the corporate character of the Holy

Eucharist better than we have done. The religious life of Orthodoxy is centred upon the regular celebration of the sacrament in strict accordance with traditions which, if not in any sense primitive, do at least go back to an early date in Christian history. And the feeling that all believers of all ages are somehow made part of each other in the sacrament is less remote to Russian Christians than it is to most of us.

The Russian distrust of laws and indeed of all external standards leads to anarchy when it is pushed to extremes. And what Russian shrinks from extremes ? But recognizing, with human inconsistency, that anarchy leads to disaster, the Russians demand strong government. And Russian rulers try to give their people the strong government which they demand, but being Russian, the rulers themselves have little sense of law, and their desire to rule firmly often degenerates into the use of arbitrary and inhuman methods, which are tolerated by the people as a disagreeable but inevitable concomitant of strong rule.

In this way Russian governments, whether Tsarist or Communist, have always tried to impose external patterns of orderly behaviour on a people who often combine outward acquiescence with a secret longing to rebel.

The Bolshevik Government commands greater resources than any Tsar and is more thoroughgoing and persistent in its attempts to impose a pattern of behaviour. It has always been the proclaimed intention of the Communist Party to create a new type of man, "The Soviet man." At its best Marxism has moral and intellectual content, but in everyday life the aspiration to remake man generally ends in the imposition of an outward conformity. Patriotic Russians may very often accept a good deal of what is said and done by their government as something necessary and desirable, but they cannot quickly discard the habit of judging men for what they are rather than for what they do.

Soviet ethics, as now taught, are not in most ways very different from the traditional ethics of the more advanced

religions; but hatred of the "class enemy" is made a duty, and crimes against socialist property become the most heinous offences. The class enemy within the Soviet Union hardly exists any longer, but the Kremlin seeks to direct popular hatred against the supposed class enemy without. There is plenty of hot-blooded hatred in Russia, such as one found in Leningrad just after the siege; but cold hatred, hatred on principle, does not come easily to Russians. And, to judge from the hysterical and unremitting attacks on successive class enemies which Kremlin publicity finds necessary, it must be no light task to bring the Russian people up to the requisite degree of hatred. Even during the war, when there were many reasons for the Russians to hate the Germans, it seemed that hate propaganda was poured forth less in response to popular demand than because most Russians were lukewarm haters, and this was thought to impair their morale as Soviet citizens.

Similarly, crimes against socialist property and political crimes are judged severely by the courts and by the administration, but not by the people. Just as nearly every westerner thinks it worse to steal from a private individual than to cheat a railway or defraud the revenue, so does every Russian think it worse to steal from a neighbour than to convert public property, though he knows that if he is found out the latter offence will be punished far more severely. Indeed the average Russian feels more pity for the criminal who is caught than for his victim, even when the victim is a near neighbour. In Tsarist days the peasants used to leave food out at night to be picked up by the convoys of prisoners on the way to Siberia. To-day it is less easy for Russians to express sympathy for prisoners and captives but that does not alter the feelings of ordinary people. Indeed, it is so difficult to live in the Soviet Union without transgressing in one way or another that nearly everyone must feel, when he sees a convoy of prisoners going to work under guard, that there is an element of luck in it that he does not make one of their number.

Thirty years ago the Communist party was doing all it could to break up family life as it had been understood in Christian countries. But by now that attempt has long been abandoned. The Bolshevik Government found by experience that a relaxation of all family ties brought a grave danger of anarchy and the power of the state has now for a good many years been exerted to promote the stability of marriage. It is often said that Communist doctrine is never changed in essentials but the changed attitude to marriage seems to be a clear case of alteration in a matter which is fundamental to social life; and where one doctrine is changed it seems only reasonable to suppose that in time others may be modified.

Unexpected influences are working beneath the surface, even inside the Communist party. I remember well visiting a picture gallery with a high-ranking party official, at a time when I was myself not yet Christian. In front of a picture of a religious subject, my companion turned and said with obvious feeling, " How very much that is good we all owe to Christianity." And it would be easy to give other evidence to show that some Russian communists recognize that " at certain stages of development " religion can be a valuable prop to society. The party as a whole remains hostile to religion—there should be no mistake about that—but already after a generation the old implacable hatred of religion has turned into a less fierce hostility, hedged with certain qualifications.

The following instance may be typical: during the war a puzzled local party branch asked higher authority why religious practices were now more freely admitted in the Red Army. The answer came back that experience showed that religious beliefs made a man a better soldier.

For all that, the attempt to impose Marxist standards of behaviour is still vigorously pursued; but considering all things, it seems that the first generation of Communist teaching has had curiously little effect on the way that the ordinary man thinks and feels. I remember vividly the day

towards the end of the war when a great procession of German prisoners was paraded through the streets for the people of Moscow to see their enemies. The Soviet papers were very naturally full of hatred of the Fascist invaders but among the crowd one could scarcely hear a word of anything but pity for the enemy. I remember phrases such as "Poor men, so far from their homes, so far from their mothers." Many of the Moscow crowd must have had plenty of reasons for hatred. But a thousand years of Christianity have left their mark.

JOHN LAWRENCE.

HUMAN RELATIONS AT WORK

(The main part of this article was given in a speech to the Congress of the Institute of Public Cleansing at Southport in June)

THERE are now twenty-three million people working in Britain, out of a total population of fifty million. But still more output per person in quality and quantity and at the right price is required if we are to survive the economic and strategic threats of the age. Manpower is the wealth of Britain; its husbanding is our main task, the man's contentment and well-being our high aim. Incidentally, we know from statistics that in the next thirty years the tendency will be for more people to retire, and by 1977 there will be three times as many people past retiring age as there were in 1911, and twice as many as in 1947. Our plans hitherto have been to retire people earlier, but the figures suggest that we shall need to revise this objective fairly soon; perhaps men will have to work till seventy and women to sixty-five in order to get the work of the country done; it is likely that individuals will wish to work longer

anyway because of the declining value of pensions on maturity. This presents an urgent sociological problem.

The Forces Influencing Work

There are five principal forces influencing the relations of people at work; the Government, the employers, the trade unions, the management, and the sociologists.

The Government. The policy of all political parties for the past fifty years has been concerned to an increasing degree with human relations in work. Successive Governments have increased legislation of all kinds to promote the health and well-being of people at work. There are several Ministries to-day working in this field—Labour, Health, Insurance, and Local Government and Planning—not to mention the Treasury and the Board of Trade. But legislation and its enforcement are not enough to promote good will in industry. The voluntary spirit is indeed something that no legislation can command. This has been true in the past. It is obviously true to-day, and no matter what form legislation may take in the future, the determining factor will always be the spirit with which people apply that legislation, work within it, and grow beyond it. Good will can never be fully expressed within legal obligations.

Employers. The nature of the employer is changing, whether it be that of the state or of a group of private shareholders. Shareholders are nowadays less in touch with the people who work in the enterprise, and much more devolves on the directorate and management. Huge undertakings have been formed in this century, both by merger and by nationalization; nevertheless there are still 247,000 factories in this country, and I believe about 200,000 of them are what are commonly regarded as small businesses, privately-owned. The development of nationalized industries changes the nature of ownership; so, of course, do the experiments carried on in the co-operative field for over one hundred years. But ownership still carries with it the responsibility for business policy: the owner is the employer. The present

issue between private and public ownership, presented as one of moral principle, will remain a disturbing factor in all industrial relations so long as it is unresolved.

Trade Unions. The third force is that of the trade unions. Over eight million people in Britain are members of trade unions, and these organizations have reached a very high degree of power and influence. With the employers, they are consulted on all matters of economic and social policy at the highest level. But because of their growth trade unions are suffering from bad communications between top and bottom in the same way as big industrial organizations do. Probably the most difficult of all the tasks of the trade union is to persuade its members of the need for proper individual and collective responsibility towards the country's well-being. In this respect they need to become organized and articulate to at least the same degree as they now are in respect of wages, conditions, and protection of rights. I believe that here the trade unions have a tremendous educational task ahead of them.

Management. Management has emerged as a skilled profession only in the last twenty or thirty years. Management is still an undeveloped science, if it is one at all; it is, rather, an art that borrows from other sciences as well as from philosophy, and in consequence it is bedevilled by a highly confused terminology. Numbers of bodies have been set up to study or teach management, and more recently a central co-ordinating body has come into existence, the British Institute of Management. The primary purpose of these organizations is to conduct research into the nature of management; secondly, they set out to encourage the better practice of it. We know a lot about the technical skills of management, such as accountancy, production, planning, etc., but we do not know enough about the social skills; how to deal with subordinates, how to collaborate with equals, how to give individuals personal satisfaction, how to promote group morale, etc. I am quite sure that progress is being made; but I think even more will

be made if we give more attention to case study, in which we start with practice and think problems through to purpose, rather than by using the much more difficult reverse method. Very little has been done so far, on the ethical aspects of management. Not until management and its branches have developed codes of conduct similar to those imposed on doctors and lawyers, shall we be making real progress in establishing professional integrity—the only reliable basis for the service of the community.

Sociologists. The fifth force is that of the sociologists, with whom I group the psychologists. These people—often regarded as a race apart, hovering on the verge of life instead of swimming in the main stream—are doing valuable research in human motivation and in other factors which make people want to live and work together. I think it pays the laymen to study the results of this research, to think more deeply about things which we have always taken for granted. Certainly the contribution of these workers must be looked at in perspective; it is after all, common sense, and can only become embarrassing if practised as an evangelistic creed. The one major snag with sociologists and psychologists is that they speak a jargon of their own, difficult for the layman to follow and understand. They tend to give big words to little actions. We must all speak broadly in the language of our fellow men; it is the first essential for any system of communications.

What makes People want to Work?

This is an urgent twentieth-century question which has not been satisfactorily answered in spite of the research that has been done on it in the progressive industrial countries. I doubt whether we shall ever achieve an exact answer. If we did I venture to suggest that life would lose its savour, for people would be categorized as types and treated as such. Nevertheless, it is up to us, if we have any responsibility for the work of others, to think seriously of the factors which give them satisfaction in work. We could all, no

doubt, produce a long list of points to be considered. I would prefer to reduce them to seven as follows :—

(1) *The Incentive of Money.* Some people, I know, hold up their hands in horror at the thought that the majority of people work for the week's wages or the monthly salary cheque. The financial incentive is however perfectly natural and right; we all have to survive, the means of survival is in the reward of labour, and every man ought to want a reasonable standard of living for himself and his dependants. Perhaps we should remind ourselves here that thousands in this country and millions throughout the world have yet to achieve a reasonable standard of living. But larger views apart, it is surely healthy that people should look forward to payment for labour so long as it does not become the exclusive motive for work. We must recognise that to work for a reward—a fair day's pay for a fair day's work—is a sound principle of employment.

(2) *People Like to be Busy.* It is my experience that the majority of people like being busy. In spite of the many cynics who say that the average person in Britain does not work hard, my own impression gained in extensive touring of the country is that the great majority of people are working better now than they have done before, and generally that they like the tempo at which they are working. Few of us like to be completely idle, and the eight hours or so, for five days a week, that are spent at work have a sobering and salutary effect on our general attitude to life as well as providing physical and mental exercise which enables us to be more rational people during the hours of family life and leisure. Even on a mass production job, where intricate processes are broken down into elementary movements, men and women often find pleasure in the rhythm of work and in the continued activity of their hands. I am not so sure that the continuing activity of the mind in a monotonous job is as generally congenial. I have a great deal of sympathy, for instance, with accounts staffs who spend their whole

time totalling masses of figures. Their minds are completely occupied and quite often their hands too, whereas machine workers in a factory workshop are quite able to develop an automatic aptitude, producing goods of a fine quality at a rapid rate while keeping their minds free to think as they please.

(3) *The Importance of Success in an Enterprise.* Most people like to work for a successful undertaking. Few things are more depressing than working for an organization that is turning out products of bad quality, which may be working in a falling market, or which is failing to match the goods and service of competitors or which is showing a consistent loss. Such conditions depress senior executives and their lack of spirit soon permeates the entire organization. It is therefore axiomatic, I think, that an enterprise should not only be successful, but should be seen to be so by all the employees. They will develop a loyalty to the company which from the outside appears quite surprising, and is an invaluable condition for the establishing of good community relations. We are on the whole a gregarious race and success can soon draw a crowd.

(4) *The Team Spirit.* Both in this country and in America research has shown the importance of what is called the working group. Most of us have an intimate circle of friends and a wider circle of acquaintances who make life interesting and worth while. There are usually some of them at our place of work, and to work everyday with them, to talk to them and listen to them is a steady daily satisfaction. Just take away a girl who gets on well with four or five others and put her in a strange group, where she is not appreciated, and see the effect on both groups! I am sure that group loyalty creates a dynamic—the kind of dynamic that brings results in individual morale and productivity alike.

(5) *Good Working Conditions.* It is true that in many small units the personality of a good manager can capture the loyalty of a group of workers in spite of bad working conditions (which may even include real hazards). That does

not condone bad conditions, but in the larger enterprises good working conditions—more than the statutary requirements—are essential. "Grouses" start more easily in the larger organizations where loyalties may be looser and where decentralization of power means that leaders are limited in their scope. However, it is undoubtedly my impression that in this country the larger units of work, especially productive factories, are now well ahead in providing good working conditions, both tangible and psychological. That is an important contribution to work-satisfaction. But it does not get us far unless there are real opportunities for personal leadership at all levels.

(6) *People Like to be Appreciated.* All of us like to be given a pat on the back, and it is far from pleasing to be continually under criticism. We all know how people respond to a compliment, especially if it is spontaneously given. I think it is right and healthy that appreciation should be a two-way business as it is in other things, and that workers should be allowed to thank the enterprise or their superior if they so wish. Usually it is a man's widow who is informed of his worthiness when it is too late! The sycophant may take temporary advantages here, but he is soon detected and, after all, criticism and appraisal are the life-blood of progress in all forms of activity—science, the press, politics, and in relations at work. In a place of work it would be reassuring to the management to know from time to time that they are doing what is right in the eyes of their employees; although much more often, of course, it is up to the management to take the initiative in this respect and pass their feelings of satisfaction on to those who have helped create it. In appreciating people I do not always think that words of praise are necessary; frequently a person feels he is appreciated if he is allowed to speak to his superior on the basis of a confidential chat. It is even more important that a person who feels "steamed up" about anything should be able to go to his superior and get it off his chest. This, I am sure, is an essential safety valve for all

working groups. As humans we all tend to become frustrated at times and to boil over, and I think it is important that there should be an outlet for this—on a personal basis if you like. The executive then acts as a form of " confidential sponge " without necessarily doing anything about it ; very often no action is needed. This can be said to be a " pastoral " duty of all the responsible personnel.

(7) *Work keeps people from the Effects of not Working.* This may seem cynical, but surely in the minds of all of us there is this thought. The community may have little reputation for benevolence, but I believe more and more people are coming to regard work as a form of service to mankind, the state, or the immediate community. People dedicate themselves to it, not consciously, but very often as an irrevocable habit. We see this in the consistent loyalty of an old craftsman getting on in years who may have worked for a dozen different bosses—in the girl who works overtime and wants to see the job through because she will feel happier if she has—in the executive who takes home some of his problems to ruminate about. All this means that some people think of work as a service transcending their immediate personal interests. At the same time, many of us, from a fear of inactivity, take on more work than we should. There is an old saying that if you want a job done give it to a busy man ; but in all fairness to the willing horse we should give more work to more people and spread the load.

Another factor, of course, is fear of that great social evil—unemployment. Even if full employment continues, it will still take generations to wipe out the memory of the appalling hardship and demoralization that set in in many parts of the country between the two wars. In fact if such a time should recur I am certain that the reaction of our much increased population would produce a political and social crisis of great magnitude. As better education becomes harnessed to our native intelligence, more and more people are thinking about such questions than ever before. I think we must not underrate the implications of an awakened social con-

science—the newspapers, the technical and sociological press, the wireless, the opportunities for discussion at work provided by works' committees, works' magazines, etc. These, and adult educational movements of all kinds are signs that people want to know what is happening to them and around them. If people want to know, I believe they want to think; and when they think, they form opinions against which they measure the behaviour of their leaders, whether in politics, in trade union life, or at work.

Leadership at Work

I believe that a leader is "an individual in an office or position who has high influence potential". I believe this because—as was said to me by someone who controlled the work of 16,000 people for thirty years—"success in life is not in the amount of money you make or your power to give orders, but in the number of people that you influence for the good of the community". All of us can look back on our lives and find that a number of people have influenced us profoundly. They have been our leaders. Perhaps you were the only person one of them influenced in the course of a long life, but something he did or said left its impression. That is what I mean by "influence potential". Those of us who are given responsibility for others, at work or in the community, can give orders to our hearts' content, we can be most correct from an ethical point of view, but in the last analysis our success depends on the extent to which we gain the respect and affection of other people. It is easy to preach about a subject. It is far more difficult to preach what you practise. In this industrial country, in this expanding situation of social experiment, leadership is a greater responsibility, a more arduous and imaginative task than ever before. Perhaps in this age of complexity, with the difficult tasks that lie before us, what we lack more than anything else is that proportion of the million men killed in the first world war who would have been at the helm to-day in so many enterprises. I am sure that too few people are shouldering

too great a burden. We need perhaps to study what is really meant by decentralization, the delegation of authority and power, and responsibility. I am quite sure that a leader, if he is to have a high influence potential, must try to set a good example in all circumstances. This is not easy—all of us are frail, and most of us a bit hazy about moral standards. We can " deal " with someone for stealing a pencil or an hour off work, but how many people of responsibility are " in the clear " in the use of their privileges of office ? The modern leader at work must have a readiness to understand the thoughts and feelings of all his people, show sympathy for them and their aspirations—which does not at all necessarily mean continual giving in to their demands—and most of all I think he must be ready to examine new ideas and methods—ideas and methods which may increase productivity and human satisfaction at the same time.

The Age of Responsibilities

Discipline, not compulsion but self-discipline, is what we need and hope for to-day. There is little doubt that most people know what are their rights, but few have given much thought to the extent of their responsibilities, especially at work.

We have grown beyond the social philosophies which showed life as struggle for survival in which the weakest went to the wall. In this century we have shown that man can rise above such a hopeless prospect, and see before him a vista of physical and spiritual dignity. Part of this dignity arises from the fact that society now accords him rights ; but the greater and nobler part—the part that makes him worthy of his rights—is his full and willing assumption of responsibilities to society.

And society, we know, is not just a word. It means everybody—and not least the people for whom and with whom we work. That is why progress in human relations at work is so important and, let it be said, so encouraging.

JOHN MARSH.

THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL CONGRESS

FOR the third year in succession the German Evangelical Church has held a congress (" Kirchentag "). The first was held in a comparatively modest way in 1949 in Hanover, the second with unexpectedly large numbers in 1950 in Essen, and the third in July of the present year with larger numbers still in Berlin. It was attended by a delegation from Great Britain, representing the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Free Churches, and headed by the Bishop of Fulham.

What is new about these congresses is that they are not meetings of clergy, nor of elected representatives, but are mass-meetings of the Church. In some ways the nearest thing to them which we have in England are the annual students' conferences organized at Swanwick by the Student Christian Movement. The German Evangelical Congress is something like a Swanwick Conference multiplied to the scale of a mass organization and extended not only to students but to the whole body of the Church. (It is significant that the president of the German Evangelical Congress, Dr. Reinhold von Thadden, is a former president of the World's Student Christian Federation, and that former members of the German Students' Christian Movement are in the forefront of this movement.)

This Berlin Congress lasted from Wednesday evening until Sunday afternoon, when it was concluded by a final meeting in the Olympic Stadium, with an overflow meeting in an adjoining site. The numbers at the concluding ceremony were about 200,000; if one were to count all those who took any part in the special services, youth meetings and other meetings which were held in connection with the congress in the churches, halls and stadia of Berlin, this number would have to be doubled. The members who worked through the four days' programme of the conference were of course smaller, but were still very con-

siderable. The main addresses, services, Bible study and " discussions " were held in four great halls, one of which was said to hold 12,000; the proceedings were relayed, when these were full, to other halls and to people sitting on the grass outside.

What gave a special character and intensity of interest to the Berlin congress was that it included Germans both from West and from East Germany. The congress was held with the approval and active co-operation of the East German Government, and more than half of the participants were from the Eastern Zone. Fifty-two special trains were run to Berlin from the Eastern Zone, apart from those which brought participants in on the Sunday for the final meeting only. The meeting-places were located both in the East and in the West Sectors of Berlin and crowds dispersing after meetings could be heard singing Lutheran hymns while they waited for their trains in East Sector railway stations.

The general theme of the congress was " Brotherhood ". It was treated in four parallel sections, (1) the Church, (2) the Family, (3) the People, (4) Work, each of them housed in one of the large halls mentioned. The daily programme in the sections (excluding special prayer-meetings, which were held earlier) began at 9.00 with a half-hour's service. This was followed by an hour's Bible study in which a set passage of the Bible was expounded by a theologian, and this again by two addresses on the main subject under discussion. This concluded the morning. After a lunch-time break, sections met again for discussion of the morning's topic. This, of course, was not real discussion. Organized discussion in small groups was something which the congress did not provide and could hardly have provided. But members of the audience who had signified their wish to speak, were called to the microphone in turn and allowed to speak for three minutes each.

In the afternoon and evening there was also a variety of services, concerts, plays, exhibitions and poetry-readings in

many halls and churches of Berlin, besides meetings organized among themselves by groups of participants.

The third section raised the question, crucial for Christians in the Eastern Zone, of the relation of the Christian to the state, and 60 per cent of participants chose this section. Some speakers from the East gave moving testimony of the pressure they are under (especially as teachers) if they try to stand against the accepted ideology, and it is clear that School and education are central points of the conflict. On the other side it was declared that a free and vigorous Church life was still possible in the East—even that it showed a vitality greater than was discernible in the West. The pressure cannot be doubted. It seems probable that there is considerable local (and temporal) variation, and everywhere an uncertainty as to when and where a blow may fall. It is characteristic of the present situation of the Church in the East that the Christian layman is more under fire than the clergyman, because the state officially recognizes freedom of worship within the Church, but will not tolerate non-Marxist activity outside the church walls. But to give a fair account of conditions in the East would require (if I were capable of writing it) another article. The striking thing is that these matters should have been discussed openly in public. A proposal that speakers from the East should be allowed to speak without their names being published was rejected on the grounds both that anonymity was wrong in principle and that attempts at concealment would be ineffective.

The impression given by the audiences was not only that they were (of course) overwhelmingly lay, but that they were of the people. Their behaviour was quiet, friendly, orderly and intent. They sat in their thousands each morning attentively following a Bible exposition which lasted an hour. There was a marked absence of fuss, scrambling or untidiness. No doubt there was a mixture in the motives impelling many to come to Berlin (to have a holiday, to see relatives, to see Berlin, to meet others from the other side

of the Curtain, to enjoy a release from the confinement of the Eastern zone), but they seemed subordinated to an overruling serious purpose.

Perhaps this Congress is most significant not for anything that was said at it, but in the fact that it took place. Brotherliness was not only discussed, but was exemplified during these days, and it is a notable thing that there should have taken place on the boundary between East and West a meeting overspanning the division, in the name of Christ and from which, I must believe, the Holy Spirit was not absent. Its scale and character seem to make it an event without parallel in recent centuries so far as the Protestant Christian churches are concerned. As Professor Henderson remarked, it was something like the pilgrimages of Mohammedan lands. No doubt the possibility of holding it depended on the concurrence of the political authorities on both sides, and this, it may be thought is precarious, so far as the Eastern authorities are concerned. I do not know for what reasons they consented (though I think it is possible to form a fairly clear idea of some political considerations which will have been present to their minds), nor whether their consent can be relied on in another year. But the consent was given, and the meeting could take place. Perhaps it is part of the Church's task in redeeming the time to use existing opportunities while they exist, without expecting too much in the way of guarantees for the future.

This Congress seems to be (together with last year's meeting at Essen) the first occasion on which the Protestant Church has used the techniques of mass-assembly which are made possible by modern inventions (loud-speakers) and were first exploited by the totalitarian regimes. The association of this method with these regimes is bound to create a prejudice in our minds. Certainly, in Berlin the impression was given that the leaders were deliberately resolved to avoid two chief dangers of mass-organization: regimentation and appeal to mass-emotion. There was a kind of spontaneous orderliness, and the speeches on the whole were

kept on a low and not a high emotional key. Further, the themes had been prepared beforehand, and a preparatory booklet published which had formed the basis of discussion by local groups beforehand, and it was intended that those present in Berlin should report back to their local congregations. The stress was laid throughout on the need of meeting one's neighbour—the man or woman sitting next to one at the meeting—as one's brother, not upon any collective solidarity. It was the Gospel that was preached, and Christians have not been shy in the past of preaching the Gospel to larger numbers.

It is true that there is an emotional elation involved in participating in a ceremonial with large numbers, and few who were present, e.g. at the final meeting in the stadium, can have been untouched by this. For example, the collection of the offertory was a moving sight. It was to have been taken by Deaconesses, who had been provided with collecting boxes for the purpose. But when this proved too slow, the organizer, on a sudden suggestion, called through the loud-speakers upon all Deaconesses, who were present in hundreds, conspicuous among the rest of the audience by their dark uniforms and white head-dresses, to rise where they sat and collect in their aprons from the rows around them (much of the money was paper). They collected, while the crowd sang "A sure stronghold our God is still". Then they made their ways as best they could through the rows of seats down into the arena and converged from all sides across the grass towards the centre, where they gathered together, filling up the outlines of a large Cross which was marked out on the grass. Such effects depend on large crowds. Should we condemn them? Or should the Church rather ask herself a variant of General Booth's question: Why should these emotional forces be left to the Devil to exploit?

Some of the powerful forces which impelled German people in such numbers to Berlin (the desire of Christians in the East to break out of their isolation, the impulse to

overcome the division of the nation) would not operate in Great Britain; other forces, springing from the failure of secular forms of community to satisfy men, would operate less strongly. But people in Great Britain already take part in mass-activities, e.g. at football matches and in holiday camps.

MICHAEL FOSTER.

REVIEWS

The Sword of the Spirit: A meditative and devotional anthology. By Walter Oakeshott. Faber and Faber. 8s. 6d.

The Headmaster of Winchester says in the preface to this anthology that it "is planned in the hope that it may be of use to those who have ceased to be interested simply in collecting facts, and have begun to be interested in considering their implications; to those who are no longer satisfied with information, and are concerned with ideas and doubts. It is intended to suggest lines of thought, rather than provide answers. It includes passages which are difficult as well as many that are simple, because it is designed for those who are no longer children."

The anthology is arranged in seven parts with a prologue; and would thus be suitable for weekly use; each section is of course a good deal too long for effective use as a whole on any one day, but the variety of the selections allows a wide range of choice according to temperament, mood, circumstances and understanding. The range and method of the anthology may be illustrated from Section III, The Call. St. John 1. 38 is prefixed, and followed (with in most cases a suggestive heading) by Isaiah 6. 1–8; a passage from an unpublished paper by Professor H. A. Hodges; Revelation 1. 10–18; a passage from Sir Thomas Mallory; a sentence from a letter of Sir Francis Drake; Luke 11. 34; a passage from a letter of Lord Esher to his son; a Note by Richard Hakluyt the elder; three paragraphs from *Pilgrim's Progress*; and two stanzas from G. M. Hopkins.

An anthology of this kind can be properly tested only in use over a longish period of time; and then one would only be sure that it was one's own meat or one's own poison. But I should say that this one would be especially useful to two sorts of person. One is the professional man or woman on the edge of Christianity, but still finding the full language of Christian devotion a stumbling block; such a one might well be helped by the juxtaposition of Biblical and other

normal devotional material with other passages, not usually so regarded, and encouraged to feel his way across the gulf. It ought to be said, that although the range of the anthology is wide and occasionally surprising, there is no effect of straining after originality; nor does it matter whether you know or do not know the books from which the pieces come. It ought perhaps also to be said that Mr. Oakeshott is surely somewhat sanguine in having in mind "especially the needs of those who are to be confirmed or have been recently confirmed" unless these are all in the upper forms. Another sort of person who would find this anthology valuable is the committed Christian for whom temporarily the language of devotion has gone dead; he may find this book avail where more conventional works do not, because the familiar verses of Bible and hymn are set in a new and suggestive context.

DAVID M. PATON.

A Guidebook to the Bible. By Alice Parmelee. English Universities Press. 4s. 6d.

As an introduction to the Bible for the layman this book could hardly be bettered. The author is well-versed in scholarly investigations, but she wears her learning lightly and has succeeded in presenting "what every Bible-reader ought to know" in a most attractive form. Anyone starting a Bible-study group would do well to require that all the members should begin by reading this book, and it will be equally useful to the individual reader. Its price is amazingly cheap, as things go now-a-days.

A. R. V.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

THE PERSONAL SIDE OF HOUSING

Dear Sirs,

The personal wrongs inflicted by the present housing shortage are rightly stressed by Mr. Henry Brooke, M.P., in your July issue, when he points out that Christians have a special responsibility for strengthening public opinion to take strong decisions, which may be unpopular ones. He points out, too, the two approaches, of stressing the need for producing more houses, and of stressing the necessity that new houses go to the people who most need them.

Mr. Brooke has touched upon the benefit which would follow from a moral stiffening of the attitude taken by landlords, tenants, and the

persons composing the authorities responsible for planning and giving effect to the housebuilding programmes. There is another participant in this problem upon whom moral pressure could profitably be exerted—namely, the building industry. Few will deny that the industry is far from being as efficient and productive as it might be; and the defects spring less from shortages, problems of finance and poor organization, than from an easy-going attitude to work and from problems of human relations.

There are many factors which render the industry inherently insecure. Besides these, the work cannot be adequately "policed" in the way that factory work can be and often is. Rapid production depends, then, upon a sense of responsibility among operatives, foremen and other representatives of management. Hence the heightened importance of moral influence.

A study published in 1948 by the Building Research Station showed that bricklayers on a building site spend only one-quarter of their time upon actual productive work. Unavoidable delays accounted for another one-quarter. The remaining half went on relaxation or bad timekeeping. The industry appears to be neither surprised nor horrified at these findings.

One can see much to excuse want of effort and a want of smooth relationships in the industry. The insecurity of tenure, the shifting life, the uncertain continuity of work imposed upon the lower ranks by the "job by job" character of building contracts all make for a cautious approach to production. The system of competitive tender for contracts adds to this insecurity by tempting the building employer to make economies which he cannot really carry. Friction is generated higher up by a relationship which assumes that an architect is a gentleman and a man of taste while a builder is a "ranker" and a mere technician.

Here are a few of the characteristic forces which make for low productivity, dishonesty and shaky human relations in the industry. All can be affected by a rise in moral standards, and it is here that the Christian world may have something to contribute.

J. G. W. Davies.

Dear Sirs,

While welcoming Mr. Brooke's article on housing in the July *Frontier*, I would like to draw attention to a section where he may mislead some readers by the assumption that our cities have got to be rebuilt in flats. They have not; it is a matter of deliberate policy.

I do not want to minimize the difficulties of any alternative policy of reducing densities in large cities. But the cost of land is not the decisive question. Recent articles in *Town and Country Planning* by a technical officer of the Ministry of Local Government and Planning showed that because of the considerably greater cost of building flats as compared with houses the advantages of building mainly with flats only occur at the very highest land values which are not all that frequent. The real difficulties are, among others, the system of subsidies from the central government which favours flats, the probably greater capital cost of building in new towns or enlarged country towns, the administrative and financial difficulties facing local authorities, difficulties of mobility of building labour, opposition from those who object to every acre of agricultural land given up to improved housing for city dwellers, and above all the difficulties and cost of decentralizing industry from city centres. It is much easier to rebuild at higher densities; it is not necessary, if the alternative is thought worth while enough. It would be a pity that the issue should be counted as closed, because in fact considerable priority has been given to rebuilding in central London at the expense of the New Towns.

DENYS MUNBY.

CHINA

Dear Editors,

I am writing to say how much I was interested to read the China number of the *Frontier* and at the same time to send you word of my own whereabouts since I left China.

One or two questions came to my mind as I read both the editorials and the articles. Firstly, whether hunger is in itself the decisive motive for revolutions; historically it is not the people who are at their last gasp who achieve revolutions; and I should think that the influence of western revolutionary doctrine, both Marxist and democratic, working upon people with this background of hunger, has been the decisive factor. Secondly, can one satisfactorily class China along with the other old Asiatic societies ruled by small groups and dominated by extremely wealthy families? That seems to apply more to India, but in China the estates were not large, and the gap between rich and poor not so great as in some parts of Asia.

In the article "Facts and Ideals in Communist China", the view is expressed that the Chinese communists believe everyone can be

converted to communism and that no one is so evil as to be beyond re-education. This was hardly the experience of some of us who were on the staff of a university campus in South China. We expressed some desire to learn more about the "New Learning" but on the whole received very little encouragement. Foreigners were generally regarded as hopelessly imperialistic; so also, I think, were some Chinese whose non-communist views were known.

Then, I wonder how surely a statement can be made to the effect that the rural population as a whole reject the Communist Government. How does any foreigner know? I certainly should not think there is very much enthusiasm, but my impression was that the local guerilla activities of peasants in South China had been a good deal exaggerated; and the one thing on which people who have come out recently seem to be agreed, is that the government seems as firmly in the saddle as ever.

However, these are only points of emphasis. But there is a remark in "Caleb's" otherwise excellent article which I think calls for a correction. He says that "Historically, Christianity came to China under the protection of gunboats and as a result of the unequal treaties following the Opium Wars". Quite apart from the fact that, historically, Christianity came to China first in the seventh century with the Nestorians, again with the Franciscans in the thirteenth, and with the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, it is still not true that the modern missionary movement in China began after the Opium Wars. Robert Morrison came to Canton in 1807. The first Protestant Christian Chinese was baptized in 1814; Leung Faat, the first Chinese minister, was ordained in 1823. The first mission hospital was opened in Canton in 1835 and regular Christian worship was going on by that year. Missions from Britain and America were started in Canton and Macao several years before the Opium Wars, and without any gunboats to aid them. They were in fact regarded with a good deal of suspicion in East India Company circles.

It is true that, later, missionaries did cash in on the Treaties, but there were some who were very uneasy about them; and there were always some who denounced the opium traffic, notably Bishop Russell of North China. But the whole question of the Church's involvement and its conscience with regard to Western penetration is a big and fascinating one. It is impossible to separate the coming of missions from Western expansion; to attempt to do so would be perhaps to take a pacifist line of "no contamination". But it can be made clear

that Christian missions in China, far from being "running dogs of imperialism", as they say, have in fact been constant critics of governments and business men alike—and not always very tactful ones either! Socially, this has led missionaries to be a bit stand-offish in relations with their fellow-countrymen in diplomatic or commercial positions, though here there has been improvement latterly. You can't have it both ways entirely, but at least it should be clear that those missionaries who didn't arrive before the business men did get started before the diplomats arrived. I don't think the Church need have an uneasy conscience in China any more than it has through being involved in Western civilization. It should of course, if truly a penitent society, constantly feel the need for forgiveness, not for being in the world, which is no sin, but for specific sins and blindnesses in its involved situation.

"VIATOR."

APPRECIATION OF ART

Dear Sirs,

P. M's modestly initialled article in your August issue will, I hope, stir up some of that controversy on the artistic frontier which readers have been led to expect from your so far somewhat stodgy journal. While awaiting the feast of wit, perhaps you will allow me to remark that any kowtowing to the spectre of respectability—even in its guise of "holy mediocrity"—will do more harm than good in the attempt to bring about a genuine fusion between religion and culture. I accept gratefully, but a trifle suspiciously, P. M's grant of conditional liberty to the arts and sciences. There is an odour of the prison-house about almost all theoretical legislation on this subject; Berdyaev is practically unique in his insistence that, whatever our occupations, we must be free to follow the movement of the Spirit wherever it may lead. The Church that continually arises on the other side of the abyss of dynamic experiment bears a very distant relation to the cramped fortress of the stay-at-home "faithful". The logic of history is surely forcing all would-be Christians to "launch out into the deep" without any certainty of a rich haul or a safe harbour. The more this uncomfortable process is intensified, the more it is likely to be seen that many who, like Nietzsche and D. H. Lawrence, have appeared to be enemies of Christendom, will be found close to the communion of those who wrestle with angels until the break of day.

WALTER ROBERTS.

3

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